1086

SUBSTANCE

OF THE

SPEECHES

OF THE

RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM PITT,

On the 23d and 31ſt of JANUARY, 1799:

INCLUDING

A correct Copy of the PLAN,

WITH THE

DEBATE which took place in the Houſe of Commons

On the PROPOSAL for an

UNION between GREAT BRITAIN and IRELAND.

To which are annexed,

The celebrated SPEECHES of the Right Honourable JOHN FOSTFR, late Chancellor of the Exchequer, now Speaker of the Houſe of Commons of Ireland, on the 12th and 15th Days of Auguſt, 1785, upon the COMMERCIAL PROPOSITIONS.

—DUBLIN:—

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1799.

BRITISH MUSEUM

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 23, 1799.

MR. PITT ſpoke to the following effect:—Sir, after the inclination which has been manifeſted by the Houſe to come to a deciſion on the queſtion before them, I ſhould feel it my duty to offer ſome apology for riſing to delay that deciſion, but as ſome difference of opinion is likely to take place in the minds of Gentlemen, and the point under conſideration is ſo intimately connected with the ſafety and proſperity of the Britiſh empire, tho' I do not think it neceſſary to enter fully into the important details which the ſubject naturally ſuggeſts, I cannot paſs over with indifference ſeveral topics which have been alluded to in the courſe of the Honourable Gentleman's ſpeech. The Honourable Gentleman in bringing forward his amendment, has appeared to me to furniſh but one argument in ſupport of the concluſion which he labours to eſtabliſh, namely, that there is no power which can make the reſult of the deliberation for adjuſting the reciprocal intereſts of both countries effectual. He has taken upon himſelf the taſk of denying to the Parliament of either kingdom the right of incorporating one country with another. With reſpect to the publication which he has undertaken to refute, that is a ſubject to which the Houſe cannot attend; but how does the Honourable Gentleman's denial of the right of the Parliaments of both kingdoms ſtand? If the Parliament of Ireland has no right to incorporate itſelf with the legiſlature of this country, without the ſenſe of the people of Ireland, as little has the Parliament of Great Britain a right to follow the ſame meaſure with that of Ireland, as little had the Parliament of Scotland a right to agree to the terms of the Union which had been effected, as little had the Parliament of England a right to ratify that Union, under which England has ſo eminently flouriſhed, under which our laws and liberties have proſpered, have been extended and confirmed, in defiance of every check and obſtacle; under which Great Britain has encreaſed in opulence, in power, and glory, and has become at once the admiration and envy of the world. If there be any truth or any conſiſtency in the Honourable Gentleman's denial of the right which he challenges, then all the ſolid and beneficial eſtabliſhments which have been carried into effect ſince the period of the Union, muſt give way and fall to the ground. Even the Honourable Gentleman would, according to his own argument, ſtand here unauthorized, unqualified to deliver his ſentiments in this Houſe. For if we admit his poſition to be juſt, it evidently follows, that there is

no one act which has been performed by us for theſe 90 years paſt, in which we have acted legitimately and conſtitutionally; and, in fact, we could not at this moment ſit here as a legiſlative body. I cannot deviſe by what means, or by what ingenious reſources the Honourable Gentleman can ſupport his ſtatement, and it ſeems that his allies are hitherto unknown. I have, however, learnt from the newſpapers, that the Honourable Gentleman has at leaſt one ally in his very extraordinary propoſition. A certain perſon has publicly declared, that every citizen of both countries ſhould come forward and deliver his opinion on the preſent occaſion; and that without the ſenſe of the aggregate bodies of the kingdom, the Parliament of Great Britain could not diſcuſs nor determine the preſent momentous queſtion. According to this plan, which appears to coincide with the ſentiments of the Honourable Gentleman, every citizen was to ſtand forth with his reaſons, and vote in numerical progreſſion, and the Legiſlature were, in the mean time, patiently to wait for the reſult of the whole. If we are to go back to the elements of Jacobiniſm, I muſt admit the argument of the Hon. Gentleman to be juſt, and we are, conſequently, no longer a Parliament. But I muſt do him the juſtice to ſay, that I am perſuaded he entertains no ſuch opinion, and if he does not, there is of courſe an end to that topic. With reſpect to the competence of Parliament to carry the meaſure into effect there does not exiſt a doubt; and if the competence of either or both Parliaments be fully admitted, let us ſee how ſtands the queſtion in your hands, as well as the amendment of the Hon. Gentleman. He complains, Sir, that the addreſs of thanks to his Majeſty was moved by my right honourable friend near me, and ſeconded by me as a matter of courſe. But why did we purſue that conduct? Was it becauſe we were not aware of the difficulties attending it; becauſe we were not appriſed of the indiſpenſable neceſſity of mature and minute inveſtigation?—No, Sir!—but becauſe we did not think it right to agitate a queſtion of ſuch tranſcendent importance on the bare mention of it; becauſe we conceived that it would be premature to bring forward for diſcuſſion, a topic, the outlines of which were unknown; becauſe we could not conſiſtently with our duties to the public, agree to ſubmit to conſideration, a ſubject ſo deeply intereſting in its relations and operations, until it was ſtated fairly and openly in all its various details to the Houſe. But the Hon. Gentleman has gone farther, and talked of a wiſh to carry it by ſurpriſe. I do not heſitate to ſay, that if any blame be imputable to us, it is that of having acted with too much caution. It has been diſtinctly recommended from the throne, to adopt ſuch ſalutary meaſures as might improve and perpetuate a connection eſſential to the common ſecurity and intereſts of both countries. We only ſtated, in conformity

conformity to that communication, the time of laying before the Houſe the materials neceſſary for forming an opinion, and added that a proper interval would take place before we took the ſenſe of Parliament. I certainly thought that the Hon. Gentleman would have candidly allowed the fairneſs of our conduct, and have done juſtice to our deſire, ſo clearly aſcertained, of treating the ſubject with all the importance and deliberation to which it is ſo peculiarly entitled.—In ſhort, the queſtion now is, ſhall we, after the expiration of a proper interval, diſcuſs and come to a determination upon the ſubject, or ſhall we in the firſt inſtance, and in the mere outſet of the buſineſs, without taking a juſt review of the conſiderations on both ſides, without entering into the eſſential points that are connected with, and muſt influence our deciſion, poſitively declare, that the meaſure is either unneceſſary to the ſecurity and happineſs of Ireland, or ſo impracticable in its operation, as to prevent any hopes of realizing it? With regard to the amendment, I ſhall ſay a few words preſently. It is enough for us to ſay, we bring forward a propoſition in our opinion ſuitable to the preſent ſtate of Ireland. We do no more. We do not aſk for immediate diſcuſſion. But Sir, what is the Hon. Gentleman's conduct? he ſays, without conſidering the ſubject in any point of view as it relates to this country or to Ireland, "I will enter upon no enquiry whatever." Now, Sir, he is bound, according to this ſyſtem of acting, to make out to our conviction, either that the ſtate of Ireland is ſo completely ſatisfactory, that we may repoſe with ſafety, and that, conſequently the propoſed arrangement is ſuperfluous, or it is incumbent on him to point out ſome other mode of a more ſalutary and more efficacious nature. Has he then, I am authorized to demand, made out any ſuch caſe? I anſwer, no! Does Ireland ſtand in need of a remedy? I have heard nothing but complaints of the miſerable and diſtreſſed ſituation of Ireland from the Hon. Gentleman and his party for a long time paſt. They have reiterated and ſtudiouſly expatiated upon the wretched condition to which that country was reduced; they have bitterly inveighed againſt the miſtakes and errors of its Government; they have deſcribed in the moſt alarming terms the horrors which it was condemned to ſuffer; they have anxiouſly ſtarted difficulties and raiſed objections againſt every word that went to extenuate the painful diſtreſſes which they related. What has he diſcovered ſince that day to induce him to retract his declarations, and impreſs him with a conviction, that Ireland is ſo ſecure, ſo happy, and ſo proſperous, as to render every kind of remedy unneceſſary? He has ſeen a rebellion raging with inveterate fury, and aiming a deadly blow at the connexion between that country and Great Britain. He has ſeen that

Rebellion

Rebellion cruſhed, and the Government of Ireland left ſtanding in ſecurity. The Hon. Gentleman ſeems to forget that he found no difficulty then in blaming the Parliament of Ireland, yet he comes forward now and is profuſe of his praiſes on it, as he was before laviſh in his cenſures. He cannot, therefore, have ſeen any ſuch thing ſince that period to juſtify this extraordinary and unaccountable derelict ion of ſentiment. The evils and calamities with which Ireland is afflicted, lie deep in the ſituation of the country. They are to be attributed to the manners of its inhabitants, to the ſtate of ſociety, to the habits of the people at large, to the unequal diſtribution of property, to the want of civilized intercourſe, to the jarring diſcord of party, and above all, to the prejudices of religious ſects. The Hon. Gentleman ſays, we cannot cure them all in a day. If they could be cured ſo, they might be cured by the Parliament of Ireland, by Parliamentary Reform or Catholic emancipation. But if the deplorable ſituation of the country can only be cured by gradual, ſober, and diſpaſſionate improvement and civilization; if much of it that is juſtly complained of can only be remedied by the circulation of capital, by the ſocial intercourſe naturally flowing from improved trade and commerce, by the diffuſion of ſocial habits, by the diſcrimination of liberal ſentiment, by removing party diſtinctions, by ſuppreſſing factious aſſociations, by allaying hereditary feuds ſubſiſting between two nations living in the ſame Iſland, and by the extinction of religious prejudices, we muſt look to it in the proviſions of an independent Legiſlature removed from the immediate ſeat of theſe evils, which ſhall not be partial to either party, but the fair arbiter and kind parent of both; which ſhall not be liable to local influence, nor be ſubject to popular incitement, and which ſhall be fully competent to make head againſt the lawleſs inroads of deſtructive innovation and anarchy. Where then, Sir, is this gradual and effectual remedy to be found, while the legiſlature remains in that country, and muſt, from the parts which compoſe it, partake of the ſpirit of either party? If, therefore, the Hon. Gentleman looks to Ireland for a Legiſlature calculated to apply a radical cure to the calamities which are manifeſt, he will not find it there. If he looks to the imperfection of the Conſtitution of Ireland, as I admit, does he contend that the Parliament of Ireland is as well adapted to have that degree of connexion and union with the great maſs of the people as the Parliment of Great Britain? Will he ſeriouſly maintain that the deſired remedy is to be hazarded in that country?—The wildeſt ſpeculation, the moſt extravagant flight of modern political theory in all its new fangled doctrines, attempted in any other country, would be more likely to be crowned with ſucceſs, and more reconcileable

conceivable to reaſon than ſuch a propoſition. It would upon every principle of common ſenſe be ſuperior to it. I do not deny that even the deformed reſemblance of the Britiſh Conſtitution is ſuperior to any proceeding from the new ſyſtem, but the imperfection of the Iriſh Conſtitution is admitted, and to that muſt be added the complicated grievances and defects in the ſtate of the country at large. With reſpect to the want of a diffuſion of property, to the extraordinary diſparity of rank, and to the ſcanty means of ſocial improvement, all producing in a proportionate degree miſery in one extreme and oppreſſion in the other—how can theſe grievances be remedied but by a cloſer connexion with Great Britain, which is ſuperior to every other nation in every thing that conſtitutes the independence, wealth, and civilization of a State? The ſituation of Ireland muſt alſo be remedied by the influx of capital and the circulation of wealth, and whence are theſe neceſſary ingredients to be ſupplied but by aſſimilating it with Great Britain, which enjoys a portion of practical bleſſings ſuperior to any other country in the world? If theſe ſtatements be correct, I am authoriſed in maintaining, that according to the principles advanced by the Hon. Gentleman himſelf, nothing can tend more completely to redreſs the unhappy and diſtracted ſtate of Ireland, than uniting, blending, and conſolidating its intereſts and views with thoſe of Great Britain.—Therefore, Sir, upon the Hon. Gentleman's principles it is not only a meaſure worthy of conſideration, but a ſpecific remedy for the ſpecific evils of which he complains. He does not ſcruple to tell us, and wiſhes Parliament to record, that the final adjuſtment with Ireland in 1782, has been found incompetent to ſettle every difference, and he told us yeſterday, that he wiſhed to perpetuate the connection between Great Britain and Ireland; but I am not content with ſaying, that the connexion ſhall be perpetuated, and that Ireland ſhall form a part of the Britiſh Empire, and conſolidate the ſtrength and energy of the whole. I do not merely ſay let Ireland be united, let her be blended with us, but let her partake of every ſolid benefit, of every eminent advantage that can reſult from ſuch an incorporation. The queſtion then is, how are theſe great objects to be attained? When the connection with Ireland was ſomething more than a name, when that connection was aſcertained, and the imperial Parliament of this country exerciſed a ſupremacy over Ireland, it did happen, that during that period the narrow policy of Great Britain, influenced with views of trade and commercial advantages, tainted and perverted with ſelfiſh motives, treated Ireland with partiality and neglect, and never looked upon her growth and proſperity as the growth and proſperity of

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the empire at large. I reprobated as much as the Hon. Gentleman, that narrow-minded policy as miſchievous and pregnant with the moſt fatal conſequences to both kingdoms. Thus a ſyſtem radically defective exiſted, but another was ſubſtituted in its place. One branch, that of the Executive Power, was left the ſame in both countries; but there were alſo left two independent Parliaments without any permanent tie between them, and that at a time when every honeſt Engliſhman and every honeſt Iriſhman ſincerely wiſhed the connexion might be drawn cloſer. The countries were left in a ſituation of intimacy which the breath of accident might at all times deſtroy. They were liable to be ſeparated by a thouſand accidents which no human foreſight or wiſdom could prevent. It is now the duty of both Legiſlatures to render their happineſs mutual and permanent. I am now, Sir, about to notice that which has been alluded to by the Hon. Gentleman as a final adjuſtment; and I can undertake to ſtate, that this final adjuſtment was made under the pretence of redreſſing exiſting grievances, without looking to future conſequences, or taking a general and neceſſary view of circumſtances—it was dictated by the ſpirit of momentary popularity, and was not founded in the ſolid intereſts of the country. Having created two diſtinct Parliaments equally able and competent to decide and dictate on queſtions of peace and war, on all points of trade and commerce—it left them as divided in all material points about which nations may conteſt as any two powers on the Continent. That ſuch was the iſſue of that arrangement cannot be denied, and I can therefore maintain, without incurring the riſque of contradiction, that there is no reaſon whatever for calling it a final adjuſtment. Such however, was the boaſted atchievement of the great patriots who took the lead in the emancipation of Ireland. The fabric which they had raiſed was popular, but the very men who raiſed it knew it was not ſound. They looked at their work, and ſaw that it was imperfect. One of theſe great patriots was gratified with a large donation from his country, and the other was celebrated in the publications of the day. When the act was paſſed which gave independence to Ireland, I think it neceſſary to obſerve that it was accompanied by a reſolution which contained a ſalutary proviſion. The reſolution ſtated that it was the opinion of the houſe that the connexion between both kingdoms ſhould be conſolidated by future meaſures or regulations founded upon the baſis of mutual conſent. [Mr. Pitt read the reſolution from the Journals of the houſe.] That reſolution was alſo carried in an addreſs to the Throne. Therefore, Sir, I have the authority of that reſolution to prove that no final adjuſtment was then made, and nothing has been ſince attempted to provide for that defective ſet-

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tlement but the partial and inadequate meaſure of the Iriſh Propoſitions, which were defeated by the perſons who framed the reſolution, and who found no ſubſtitute in their room. The *onus* of ſhewing that it was not a final adjuſtment, lies with thoſe who framed that reſolution; I mean with the Hon. Gentleman and his friends. The *onus* lay with the Hon. Gentleman to ſtate what means and what reſources he had in his mind to anſwer the pledge given to his country. But, Sir, is there no probable caſe in which the Legiſlatures of both kingdoms may differ? Has the Hon. Gentleman forgotten that one caſe did ariſe, and that within the ſhort ſpace of 16 years? With that experience before my eyes which we foreſaw, no arguments can at preſent be neceſſary to ſhew that the poſſible recurrence of ſuch a caſe ſhould be precluded. The caſe to which I allude, is one which has been noticed by the Hon. Gentleman, but noticed only to be gloſſed over. I mean the Regency. The difference of principle was evident, for the Iriſh Parliament decided upon one principle, and the Britiſh Parliament upon another. They both led to the appointment of the ſame Perſon, but that was accidental, for that Perſon muſt have governed Ireland upon one principle and England upon another. He would have been Regent in one capacity in one country, and in a capacity directly the reverſe in the other. It, therefore, followed that the office might, upon grounds equally juſtifiable, have been veſted in two diſtinct perſons. Will any man, with ſo inſtructive an example before his eyes, talk with ſincerity of a final adjuſtment? Will any man tell us that the ſecurity of the empire is in its preſent view founded on a permanent baſis? In the only war which has taken place ſince the eſtabliſhment of Iriſh independence, the queſtion of mutual intereſt has been ſo exactly the ſame, that I cannot quote any difference of opinion on that head. Fortunately, the only great inſtance in which two countries could act in oppoſition had not then occurred, and the local intereſt of Ireland has in the preſent war been ſo intimately connected with this kingdom, and her exiſtence and welfare has ſo much depended upon us, that there is no opportunity of citing a caſe of diſpute between both nations on the great queſtions of peace and war. But will the Hon. Gentleman pretend to maintain, that when the habit of diſcuſſing the foreign relations of the empire ſhall take place, the Parliament of Ireland may not, as it might naturally think itſelf entitled to do, proceed to enquire into treaties and alliances?—On a ſuppoſed difference of local intereſt, will the Hon. Gentleman tell me it is impoſſible that the Parliament of Ireland ſhould take one ſtep in giving advice to the Sovereign, and the Parliament of Great Britain another? If in the preſent conteſt, the Oppoſition were to have as

much influence in Ireland as they formely poſſeſſed, a vote for peace might be paſſed, and the efforts of Great Britain paralized. Will the Hon. Gentleman tell me, that the Parliament of Ireland might not in ſuch a caſe neutralize its ports, prevent the raiſing of recruits for the army and navy, and ſtrike a fatal blow at the power, and endanger the exiſtence of the empire? Let any man maturely reflect on the dangers that may poſſibly reſult from the ſituation of both countries, and he will tremble at the perils to which they are expoſed. Even with regard to the conteſt in which we are now ſtruggling for the deareſt and moſt valuable conſiderations, is there not ground for juſt alarm? It is true, that the influence of the Oppoſition party in Ireland, has been leſs prominent than ever. The influence of the great Patriot is extinct in Ireland, nearly in the ſame way that the reputation of the other great patriots here in England has expired. But if we wiſh to render the connexion perpetual, and to make the ties indiſſoluble, ſhall we do our duty to either country if we neglect to bring forward this propoſition? I have, Sir, been arguing to provide for the proſperity and ſafety of Ireland, and to remedy the miſerable imperfections of the arrangement made in 1782. But how does it ſtand at preſent? The ſituation of the country is indeed deplorable. Rent by party diſtraction, torn by the diviſion of ſects, ſubject to the revival of inflamed hoſtility, a prey to the hereditary animoſity of the old Iriſh and the Engliſh ſettlers, the ſcene of conſtant prejudices proceeding from ſuperſtition and ignorance. Add, Sir, to this true colouring, the infuſion of the laſt deadly poiſon, Jacobiniſm, and they will altogether produce a picture of the moſt horrible kind. There we may clearly diſtinguiſh a miſerable ſtate of ceaſeleſs contention, of perpetual diſtraction, of the moſt rooted animoſity, which, however great the exertions of the Legiſlature of Ireland may be, and I heartily give them all the praiſe which they have received from the tardy panegyric of the Hon. Gentleman, they can never ſucceed in removing, Theſe conſiderations, without entering into any minute details, which, as I have before obſerved, are in this ſtate of the buſineſs unneceſſary, are, I truſt, ſufficient to induce the Houſe to agree to the inveſtigation of means that may be deemed adequate to eſtabliſh the internal tranquillity of that country, add to the ſtore of our common reſources, and conſolidate and ſtrengthen the general intereſts of the empire. If any inſtitution be inadequate to provide an effectual remedy for theſe evils, it is, Sir, I do not heſitate to ſay, the Iriſh Legiſlature; not from any defects of intention, not from any want of talent, but from its own nature; and it is and muſt be incapable of reſtoring the internal happineſs of the country, and fixing the proſperity of the people on a firm and permanent baſis, as long

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as the preſent ſtate of thal kingdom, with reſpect to its relation to Great Britain, continues. That Legiſlature, formed as it is, muſt continue ever radically defective. I have, Sir, ſpoken an honeſt and a fair opinion. I have not been deterred from it by any apprehenſion that it may not prove acceptable to any ſet of men on this or on the other ſide of the water; but there is no circumſtance of probable difficulty, no idea of the loſs of popularity, no perſonal conſideration, however weighty, can prevent me from uſing every exertion and every effort in my power to accompliſh a meaſure which, in my firm conviction, directly tends to promote the happineſs of the people of Ireland, to eſtabliſh the mutual relations of both countries on the moſt ſolid and advantageous baſis, and to conſolidate in the moſt permanent manner the genuine intereſts of the Britiſh Empire."

THURSDAY, JANUARY 31, 1799.

The Order of the Day being read for taking His Majeſty's moſt Gracious Meſſage into Conſideration, the SPEAKER read the Meſſage as follows:

"GEORGE REX.

"*His Majeſty is perſuaded that the unremitting induſtry with which our enemies perſevere in their avowed deſign of effecting the ſeparation of Ireland from this kingdom, cannot fail to engage the particular attention of Parliament; and his Majeſty recommends it to this Houſe to conſider of the moſt effectual means of counteracting and finally defeating this deſign, and he truſts that a review of all the circumſtances which have recently occurred (joined to the ſentiment of mutual affection and common intereſt) will diſpoſe the Parliaments of both kingdoms to provide in the manner which they ſhall judge moſt expedient, for ſettling ſuch a complete and final adjuſtment as may beſt tend to improve and perpetuate a connexion eſſential for their common ſecurity, and to augment and conſolidate the ſtrength, power, and reſources of the Britiſh Empire.* "G. R."

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. PITT, roſe, and ſpoke to the following effect:—"Sir, when I propoſed to the Houſe, to fix this day for the conſideration of a ſubject ſo highly important in its nature, and ſo intimately connected with the ſafety of the Britiſh empire, as that which was recommended in His Majeſty's moſt gracious Meſſage, I indulged in the hope that His Majeſty's communication to the Parliament of Ireland with reſpect to the ſame object, would have opened a ſpeedy and effectual way to ſecure the happy accompliſhment of a meaſure which was calculated to draw cloſer the ties of mu-

tual intereſt between both countries, to perpetuate a connexion eſſential for their common ſecurity and happineſs, to augment the power and reſources, and conſolidate the ſtrength of the Britiſh empire, and more immediately to eſtabliſh on a firm and permanent baſis the tranquillity and proſperity of Ireland itſelf. That hope I am ſincerely concerned to obſerve, has been diſappointed by the meaſures which have ſince occurred. I know that the Parliament of Ireland, in the diſcuſſion and deciſion which have followed His Majeſty's moſt gracious communication, has exerciſed that competency which I do not mean to queſtion, but admit fully poſſeſſes, to reject or adopt any meaſure propoſed to them by the Executive Government. One of the Houſes of Parliament in Ireland has however thought proper to adopt the recommendation. Feeling as I do a firm perſuaſion of the great, ſolid, and extenſive benefits that muſt reſult to Ireland from conſenting to carry into effect the object propoſed; feeling as I do the immenſe addition that muſt alſo accrue to the Empire at large, and the conſolidation of ſtrength, intereſt, and affection that muſt be derived to both countries from the execution of it—I cannot avoid ſaying, that I am impreſſed with the deepeſt regret for the diſappointment which has taken place. But, Sir, knowing at the ſame time the undoubted right of Parliament to come to ſuch reſolutions as it may think moſt proper, and to act in every manner moſt conformable to the ſentiments by which it is actuated, I do treat the deciſion of Parliament on that momentous conſideration with the greateſt deference and reſpect. I have not the moſt remote intention of agitating matters, which might poſſibly, in the courſe of their diſcuſſion, give riſe to a ſpirit of animoſity, or lead to hoſtilities between both countries; but while I treat that deciſion with every mark of reſpect to which, as the act of an independent Houſe of Commons, it is clearly intitled, I muſt ſay, that I have a duty to perform, which, conſiſtently with my conviction and feelings as a Member of the Britiſh Parliament, I am bound to execute. That duty is to ſtate to the Houſe the outlines of the plan which has been deemed juſt and effectual for ſettling a complete and final adjuſtment between both countries.

I am ready to admit that there is no chance of bringing it to a happy termination while it is oppoſed by the Houſe of Commons of Ireland; and having allowed that, I muſt obſerve, that it is upon that very ground that I feel it the more neceſſary to urge it now, and by ſtating the outlines of the meaſure, to ſhew the vaſt and permanent advantages which have been neglected, in conſequence of the vote which precluded the diſcuſſion of the propoſed arrangement. It is therefore

fore my duty to explain the motives by which the meaſure was dictated and brought forward, and to ſtate openly and fairly the plan to this Houſe, in order that it ſhould remain recorded here, as that on which the Parliament of this country, if it be ſanctioned with our approbation, is willing to cloſe with the Parliament of that kingdom, leaving it to that country to reject or adopt, as it may judge moſt expedient, at any future opportunity. When a great queſtion like the preſent was brought forward in Ireland, unaccompanied as it was by any details, it was not unlikely that it ſhould meet conſiderable oppoſition from national pride; from miſrepreſentation; from miſconſtruction, and a variety of cauſes; yet to whatever motives the ſentiments of diſlike which have been manifeſted againſt it may be attributed, it is, I muſt obſerve, eſſential and neceſſary it ſhould be known on what grounds the Parliament of Great Britain came forward to promote a more intimate and laſting connexion between the two countries. In this point of view, I have no heſitation in ſaying, that I am convinced, under the apparent diſcouragement which prevails, notwithſtanding the prejudices which have been diſplayed, that this meaſure is founded upon ſuch principles of reciprocal benefit and proſperity, and is ſo materially connected with the general intereſts of the Britiſh Empire, from which Ireland cannot be ſeparated for a moment in argument or in fact, that it ſhould be ſtated clearly and diſpaſſionately by us, and be left open to the free, ſober, and unprejudiced diſcuſſion and deciſion of the Iriſh Parliament for rejection or adoption on any future occaſion. It will not, I truſt, be denied, that it is neceſſary time ſhould alſo be given to all thoſe in any manner connected with the reſult of it, to deliberate on the probable effects of the plan, and to form a juſt eſtimate of its conſequences. It is neceſſary that all thoſe who are in any degree implicated in the event ſhould be at full liberty to weigh the various reaſons which may operate on their minds, either in favour or againſt the meaſure, with reſpect to the preſent and future ſtate of trade, commerce, and manufactures, and their extenſive and complicated relations; with reſpect to the preſent diſtracted ſtate of Ireland, and the ſatisfactory proſpect of allaying and ſuppreſſing for ever all party animoſity and religious prejudice; and with reſpect to the preſent want of improvement in the manners of the people, and the probable ſpeedy progreſs of civilization and internal happineſs. Theſe weighty topics cannot be candidly and impartially determined without minute inveſtigation, unremitting attention, and cool, mature, and diſpaſſionate diſcuſſion. I am the more encouraged in the hope that a plan pregnant with ſuch bleſſings, will prove ultimately

ſucceſsful,

ſucceſsful, when I obſerve that the majority which rejected all diſcuſſion, without wiſhing to hear the grounds on which the recommendation was ſupported, conſiſted of barely more that one half of the Members preſent. When I obſerve in the other Houſe of Parliament, containing ſo very large and valuable a proportion of the property of the kingdom, a decided opinion expreſſed in favour of the meaſure; when I obſerve that on the very outſet of the buſineſs, when popular prejudice and clamour were induſtriouſly excited againſt it, that much of the trading part of the kingdom, and a conſiderable ſhare of commercial intereſt came forward with the acknowledged declaration of its utility: Theſe, Sir, are ſufficient grounds to juſtify me in entertaining every rational expectation of ſucceſs. But notwithſtanding all theſe great and ſatisfactory reaſons that offer themſelves to my mind for expecting a favourable concluſion, I cannot ſay that I look to an adjuſtment crowned with the unanimous concurrence, though, I truſt, ratified with the full and deliberate conſent of the Parliament of both kingdoms. It is, Sir, with a view of theſe objects that I think it my duty to bring forward this day a plan for carrying into effect the object of His Majeſty's gracious communication; not for the purpoſe of being immediately acted upon, but that it may be known, and that the juſt grounds of ſucceſs may be aſcertained. With this intention it is my duty to open to the Houſe the outlines of the plan, obſerving that I do not mean to make them the ſubject of debate at preſent. Acting upon this plain, and I truſt conſiſtent principle, it appears to me that the faireſt way of proceeding will be to ſtate to the Houſe a ſtring of Reſolutions which have been prepared for that end. When the conſideration of them comes on, that cannot be done while you, Sir, remain in the Chair, and it will be neceſſary for me to move the Houſe to reſolve itſelf into a Committee of the whole Houſe. If it ſhall be agreed on by the Committee that the reſolutions are fit to form the baſis of the out-lines, my opinion will be that the Parliament ſhould adopt them, vote an Addreſs on the ſubject of them, and lay them at the foot of the Throne to be communicated to Ireland, when an opportunity favourable to the diſpaſſionate inveſtigation of them ſhall occur. I have now, Sir, explained to the Houſe the motives which have induced me to ſubmit the plan to Parliament, and I will now endeavour to explain the general grounds of the meaſure, and the general arguments by which it is ſupported, and to give at the ſame time as ſhort a view as I can of the whole. As to the principle on which all the out-lines are founded, I am happy to find that no difference of opinion exiſts on that head. I am

happy

happy to find from what has happened in this Houſe in the late Debate, when the ſubject was firſt introduced and agitated, that the general principle of the neceſſity of perpetuating the connexion between both countries was fully recognized. That principle, which once admitted, and which indeed cannot be denied, was forcibly ſtated by an Hon. Gentleman oppoſite to me, who deprecated all diſcuſſion on that night. But the neceſſity of the connexion thus acknowledged, leads neceſſarily to the moſt important conſiderations. We are bound to conſider that connexion with due regard to the intereſts of Ireland —we are to conſider it with regard to its trade, manufactures, and commerce—we are to conſider it with regard to the permanent eſtabliſhment of its domeſtic peace and happineſs; with regard to its perfect ſecurity from the avowed deſigns of the enemy to effect its ſeparation from this country; with regard to its ſtrengthening the power and reſources of the Empire at large, and with regard to admitting it to the full and unqualified enjoyment of all the bleſſings by the poſſeſſion of which Great Britain is ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed from all other nations. Admitting this principle, on which the Legiſlatures of Great Britain and Ireland muſt act, let me now aſk, what is the preſent ſituation of that connexion, the neceſſity of preſerving and perpetuating which is ſo amply allowed, even by thoſe who declare themſelves unfriendly to the meaſure now under conſideration? That connexion, ſo neceſſary to the proſperity, and even to the exiſtence of Ireland, and ſo advantageous to the common intereſts of the Empire, has been attacked both by foreign and domeſtic enemies. Our foreign enemies have failed in every attempt, though the proſpect of diſſolving that connexion forms perhaps the only remaining hope of the foe. But he has been hitherto baffled in every endeavour to accompliſh an object ſo deſirable to his intereſts; he has been ſucceſſively defeated with diſgrace, and all his attempts have been triumphantly turned into additional means of our own ſecurity. Perhaps the means uſed by the enemy to accompliſh the ſeparation of both countries, may be the means of knitting cloſer the union that exiſts between us, and of ſtrengthening the barrier which in the preſent criſis we oppoſe to the perfidious principles and boundleſs ambition of France. That connexion has not only been attacked in an alarming manner by a foreign enemy, but it has been attacked in a ſtill more dangerous way by domeſtic treaſon, excited by France; and in addition to the diſtracted ſtate of Ireland, all the horrors of Jacobiniſm have been engrafted on the complicated miſeries of the old ſyſtem. Let us then ſee if any new order of things congenial to the exigencies of the moment,

ſuitable and calculated to ward off impending danger, and adapted, as far as human wiſdom can make it, to remedy the growing evils, can be deviſed to ſecure the connexion which is confeſſed in the fulleſt ſenſe to be abſolutely neceſſary. We know that the connexion, as it is at preſent formed, is ſuch, that the greatneſs of the danger likely to reſult from it is admitted by all. We ought to be wiſe in time; we ought to provide againſt the inſidious and tyrannical encroachments of an enemy, who, though not truly wiſe, enjoys a pre-eminence of cunning in knowing how to invent and apply with ſucceſs all the means of miſchief, murder, and devaſtation. If there exiſts any doubt of the precarious ſtate of the preſent connexion, this circumſtance alone is ſufficient to juſtify us in viewing it with apprehenſion and fear, and in finding out means to alter, improve and perpetuate it. But it is ſufficient, without any extraneous reference, to look at that connexion which all men wiſh to preſerve and render permanent; and I do not heſitate to maintain, that it does afford the ſecurity we deſire for either country. I took the liberty of ſtating on a former night, that the ſettlement of 1782, ſo far from deſerving the name of final adjuſtment, was one that left the connexion liable to periſh by every breath of accident, and ſubject to be broken by the ſlighteſt caſualties. It was in truth inadequate, incompetent, and in every reſpect ill calculated to ſecure the end for which it was framed. Let no man think that I conſider the conduct of Great Britain before the ſettlement of 1782 liberal. We certainly had previouſly acted with a narrow ſelfiſh policy towards Ireland. Jealous of their commercial proſperity, looking upon them as the rivals of our proſperity, we only regarded them as the inſtruments of our aggrandizement. But afterwards, when that ſelfiſh, that illiberal, that defective ſyſtem was altered in 1782, what was ſubſtituted in its room? We demoliſhed one ſyſtem, and we furniſhed nothing in its place. This, Sir, is not preſumption, it is not bold and unſupported aſſertion; it is not forced conjecture. I take it to be ſo from the ſettlement itſelf. I prove it to be ſo from the declared opinion of the Britiſh Parliament. I aſſert it to be ſo from the recorded opinions of the miniſters themſelves who made it. It is proved from the acts of the men who formed it—from their own knowledge who made it, that is was incomplete, partial, and defective. Two independent Legiſlatures, without any common bond of connection, and which the occurrence of any caſualty might for ever ſeparate, were eſtabliſhed. The ties between both countries, which ought to have been ſtrong and laſting, were ſlight and fleeting, and the very men who brought forward the new arrangement were diſſatisfied with their own work;

work; they ſaw the imperfections of it, and wiſhed to provide for them by a ſubſequent proceeding. Yet nothing ſince had been done to remove the defects under which it laboured, and that boaſted ſettlement remained to the preſent hour in the ſame precarious and nugatory ſtate. But I have great authority for going farther in this mode of argument; and I can ſtate, without expoſing myſelf to the danger of contradiction, that even in the opinion of ſome of thoſe perſons who have recently oppoſed the preſent meaſure in Ireland, the ſettlement of 1782 was not calculated to perpetuate the connection between both countries, to ſecure the commercial proſperity of Ireland, or to encreaſe the common intereſt and power of the Britiſh Empire. I have, Sir, in favour of this poſition, the authority even of one * for whom I certainly entertain the higheſt reſpect—one, Sir, who in that country fills the important ſituation which you do here. His opinion was, that the connection of 1782 could not laſt. Sir, I ſtated to you on a former occaſion the hiſtory of that tranſaction, and it fully appears from your Journals. A meſſage was ſent from the Throne, ſtating the grievances complained of in an addreſs from the Lords and Commons of Ireland, and the ſubject matter of the complaints was by His Majeſty's command laid before the Parliament of Great Britain: it was immediately followed by acts of redreſs. The repeal of the Declaratory Law was moved and carried, and ſatisfaction was given to the exiſting diſcontents with reſpect to the independency of the Iriſh legiſlature: but the Miniſters of that day were clearly of opinion, and Parliament coincided in that ſentiment, by reſolving that a future connection was neceſſary; and as a ſupplement, it was recorded in the Journals, that ſuch other terms ſhould be ſettled as might be agreed on between the two nations." [Here Mr. *Sheridan* obſerving acroſs the table that Mr. Pitt ought to read the reſolution to the Houſe, Mr. Pitt continued] "It is certainly my deſire, Sir, that every paper and document ſhould be read before the Houſe proceeds to the diſcuſſion; but I beg not to be interupted in the courſe of my obſervations. I ſay, Sir, that a further connection was deemed neceſſary. The Hon. Gentleman may read as much as he pleaſes, but he muſt alſo ſtate to the Houſe the particulars of the ſubject, and the reaſons by which he thinks himſelf enabled to ſupport this explanation of the text. An addreſs was voted to his Majeſty in conſequence of

 that

* See Mr. Foſter's Speeches in the Houſe of Commons of Ireland, Auguſt 1785, on a Motion "for leave to bring in a Bill for effectuating the Intercourſe and Commerce between Great Britain and Ireland, &c."—at the end of this Publication; taken verbatim from Mr. W. Woodfall's *Impartial Sketch of that Debate.*

that proceeding, and a gracious meſſage from his Majeſty was delivered by an Hon. Gentleman, a Member of this Houſe, who was then one of the principal Secretaries of State, but who is not now in the Houſe. Meaſures were recommended to be taken in order to extend the ſettlement; but no ſuch meaſures have ever ſince been adopted. It is therefore undeniable, that ſuch meaſures were recommended for the purpoſe of making that ſettlement perfect, which was admitted to be altogether imperfect. It conſequently remains to this hour in its original imperfect and incomplete ſtate. We ſay that Great Britain and Ireland ought to be inſeparably united. On that general principle there is no ſhade of difference of opinion; yet the Parliaments were different in both kingdoms, and the Crown which governed both had only the power of rejecting or accepting the acts of the Iriſh Parliament under the Great Seal of that kingdom. If to guard againſt the fatal effects of party and local prejudice,—if to provide an effectual remedy for the alarming diſcontents excited by hereditary feuds—if to extinguiſh for ever the inveterate animoſity of jarring ſects, and conſtant diſſenſions, be the great ends to which we ſhould direct our attention, and for the attainment of which we ſhould exert every effort, it would be ſufficient barely to ſtate the meaſure, in order to evince its ſalutary operation. But, Sir, I have an opinion in additional ſupport of my ſentiments, which muſt go, from the authority of the perſon who delivered it, a conſiderable way in my favour. It was delivered on the commercial propoſitions, which were not accepted, and conſequently can be no bar to any further arrangements, and it muſt have great weight with the Houſe. I am not, Sir, about to diſcuſs the nature of the commercial propoſitions in 1785, though they went in the opinion of many, to palliate the evil. But thoſe who maintained the ſettlement in 1782 with undiminiſhed perſeverance,—I ſpeak I am ſure upon better record than that of Parliamentary proceedings,—thoſe who maintained the ſettlement of 1782 were particularly zealous and indefatigable in their ſupport of the commercial propoſitions of 1785, and their opinion on that point was contained in a ſtatement drawn up by thoſe who were the parties in the previous arrangement. I find, then Sir, that the Gentleman whoſe authority I mean to cite, and who was at that time Chancellor of the Exchequer in the Iriſh Houſe of Commons (Mr. Foſter,) did not ſcruple to expreſs his ſentiments in the following terms, which are contained in the ſtatement to which I allude—"If this infatuated country gives up the preſent offer, ſhe will, I fear, look for it again in vain."—Now, Sir, I hope that will not be the caſe, and that the offer will be

given

given again, even upon more advantageous conditions. But this Gentleman goes on and obſerves—" Things cannot remain as they are." *(A general cry of Hear! Hear!)* Yet, Sir, all this language, all theſe ſtrong and deciſive declarations are forgotten, and the boaſted, final adjuſtment of 1782 is pleaded as an unanſwerable argument againſt all further ſettlement. But the Hon. Gentleman proceeding ſtill more forcibly to impreſs his ſentiments, remarks—" Commercial jealouſies muſt ariſe. The connection cannot laſt."—I beg leave to obſerve, that I do not quote this againſt the opinion of the Hon. Gentleman, but with a view of ſhewing, that the connection of 1782, on which ſo much reliance is placed by the enemies of the preſent meaſure, was in reality never felt to be final and ſufficient for its purpoſe. Permit me, Sir, to aſk, how will Gentlemen oppoſite to me, get rid of this weighty authority which goes ſo ſtrongly againſt them and which they now begin to reſpect?—Will they undertake to prove, in oppoſition to this opinion of the Gentleman to whom I allude, that the preſent connection does not carry in it the ſeeds of future ſeparation, that it is not likely to produce a conſtant round and ſucceſſion of commercial jealouſies ariſing from the jaring acts of two diſtinct and ſeparate Legiſlatures? If they cannot prove this, and I believe they will hardly attempt ſo very arduous a taſk,—the queſtion that naturally preſents itſelf is, how can theſe evils, and the dangers which threaten both nations be prevented? I anſwer that they can only be averted by one compact, or by blending both Parliaments together in an incorporate Union. What then is the ſtate of opinion on this important point? Why, in ſpite of the opinion of the Gentleman to whom I referred—in ſpite of the advantages that muſt be derived to Ireland in particular from this meaſure, in ſpite of the conſolidation of the ſtrength and reſources of the empire, it ſo happens that opinions borrowed from this ſide of the water converted the Iriſh Parliament, and convinced them that it was improper to admit any arrangement as inconſiſtent with the independence of the Legiſlature. The conſequence is plain and undeniable. The ſeeds of ſeparation muſt be ſuffered to remain, and the exiſting connexion between us may be completely annihilated by mere accident. The only mode of providing an efficient remedy is by compact or by union. But if to all the weight of theſe authorities—if to the opinion of Gentlemen who have maturely conſidered paſt tranſactions and the relative ſituation of both kingdoms—if the experience of what has ſince happened—if facts melancholy and deplorable, which are recent in the mind of every man, fail in ſhewing the neceſſity of the meaſure, there is however one ſolitary event, the only great occaſion

which has occurred ſince the final adjuſtment, which ſhews beyond the poſſibility of doubt the practical defects of that arrangement; and after this proof, which had been previouſly ſeen in argument, will any one oppoſe the neceſſity of ſome further proceedings to improve and perpetuate the connexion? The circumſtance was indeed of a moſt intereſting kind, and was pregnant with the moſt imminent perils; and if we had not been relieved by a happy event from the perplexities and embarraſſments into which it muſt have involved us—an event to which we muſt look with complete ſatisfaction, exultation, and gratitude, we ſhould have been eſſentially ſeparated from Ireland. Every Gentleman muſt know to what I allude. In the queſtion of the Regency, the deciſion of the Iriſh Parliament was in direct oppoſition to that of the Parliament of Great Britain. It was founded upon principles directly oppoſite to thoſe by which the Britiſh Parliament was influenced, and it was but mere accident that thoſe principles led to the nomination of the ſame perſon as Regent, but with different reſtrictions and oppoſite offices. They certainly might with equal conſiſtency and juſtice have led to the appointment of different perſons; and can any man, after that inſtructive example, heſitate to ſay, that the ſecurity for the ſtability of the connexion between the two countries is inſufficient, partial, and defective? In one kingdom the office of Regent was to be held by one tenure, and in the other by an oppoſite one, and thus the link of connexion was completely deſtroyed. Such an act would have been politically and practically the cauſe of diſcord and ſeparation, and muſt have impaired the ſecurity of the Empire. If then a queſtion has ariſen of ſo very dangerous a tendency in the ſhort ſpace of ſixteen years, and that we have found the actual ſyſtem eſtabliſhed between us to have failed in promoting that connection, in the neceſſity of which there is no diverſity of opinion, I aſk, are or are we not authoriſed, are we not rather compelled by the irreſiſtible dictates of our duty and our own conviction, to provide againſt any future contingency? But entering ſomewhat deeper into this moſt ſerious conſideration, and looking at the diſtinct powers of conſidering of peace or war, of diſcuſſing foreign treaties and alliances on any ſuppoſed or real grounds of national advantage, which in their unqualified extent muſt be allowed to belong to the Parliament of Ireland, will any Gentleman tell me that the deciſion of the Iriſh Parliament might not be one way, and that of the Parliament of Great Britain another? Will any Gentleman undertake to aſſure us that the Parliament of Ireland would not give different advice to their Sovereign from the Parliament of Great Britain? Will it be advanced that queſtions of ſuch moment ſhould not occur on which the independence

dence and even the exiſtence of either kingdom might be at ſtake? I believe, Sir, no man will be found bold enough to advance ſuch aſſertions. Are we contented with ſaying that the ſuppreſſion of party diſtinctions is ſufficient? Are we ſatisfied with providing a partial cure for the evils and grievances which are ſo juſtly complained of? No, Sir! I wiſh to ſpeak out largely for all that are involved in the reſult of this great queſtion. I ſincerely wiſh I could diſcuſs with every man in Ireland his reſpective intereſt, with a juſt reference to the proſperity of all. Suppoſe the Parliament of Ireland ſhould think the preſent war unjuſt? do Gentlemen mean to ſay that ſuch a difference of opinion could not exiſt between us? I ſhould be glad to have an anſwer to theſe conſiderations which have already been admitted as juſt by every man, and even by the Hon. Gentleman whom I have only heard on the ſubject as a warm friend to perpetual connexion. Admitting, then, this principle, the queſtion is, have we or have we not ſufficient grounds to proceed in ſtrengthening the ties of union between both countries? We are now engaged in a conteſt the moſt awful and important that has ever called for the combined exertion of wiſdom, magnanimity, and perſeverance. If then we have a weak point expoſed to the open attack and inſidious arts of the enemy, and which has been actually attacked in both theſe ways by the enemy, I ſhould ſay, let that point be fortified. I ſhould ſay ſo more decidedly from the nature of the ſtruggle in which we have ſo glorioufly oppoſed the horrors of revolution with increaſing ſpirit and proportionate perſeverance. I ſhould ſay ſo becauſe we are involved in a conteſt of order and regular Government againſt confuſion and anarchy, of morality againſt boundleſs and ſavage licentiouſneſs, of religion againſt impiety, of virtue and ſocial happineſs againſt vice of the moſt deteſtable kind, and the violation of every ſocial duty, of property againſt plunder and depredation. Theſe expreſſions have been treated as idle declamations, but they are now practiſed and atteſted by the bleeding wounds of devaſtated Europe; yet realized as the language has been, it is too feeble to paint in their genuine colouring all the horrors and all the miſeries of revolutionary ſucceſs. Is there then, in the actual criſis of public affairs, any man that will not feel that to bind Great Britain and Ireland together in a cloſer union againſt the fatal inroads of France, is a benefit ſo important and ineſtimable, not only to ourſelves but to the whole world, that even commercial advantages, local conſiderations, political importance, muſt all ſink and appear weak in compariſon of that great and indiſpenſable object. But even theſe conſiderations will ſuffer no abatement from the preſent meaſure, for they will be greatly increaſed, while we ſhall unite to form an inſurmountable bar-

rier againſt the inordinate and ſanguinary power of the enemy. The accompliſhment is the more eaſily to be attained, as they are neceſſary in ſecuring us mutually from danger, and in defeating the ambitious and turbulent hopes of France. There has not been, there is not a ſingle Stateſman, there is no man, however little acquainted with the real intereſts of Europe, who will not tell you that the union of Great Britain and Ireland is a moſt invaluable acceſſion of ſtrength to the whole, as a conſolidation of the power and reſources of the Britiſh Empire; and can any man deny that the component parts of it are more deeply intereſted in that grand point, without which they muſt all fall to pieces, than in any benefits, however great, that may reſult from local advantages? All authors who have reaſoned with any degree of ſound political argument, have been uniformly of that opinion. And, Sir, if any thing in particular could infuſe terror into the heart of the enemy, it would be, that the ſyſtem which between this country and Ireland was before nominal and precarious, ſhould become real and permanent. But in what degree does it tend to increaſe the ſecurity and happineſs of Ireland? In the exact proportion which all the parts muſt bear to the whole, when all are equally conſolidated in giving power to the empire. A proportion too ſtrong, too evident, and too cogent to require the ſupport of argument. That which has hitherto enabled us to make a formidable and triumphant ſtand againſt the eccentric, extravagant, and extraordinary power of France—that which gradually leads to open to each other our reſpective markets—that which by reciprocal intercourſe improves the ſtate of manners—that which by introducing the common uſe of capital to the encouragement of agriculture, commerce and manufactures—that which extinguiſhes the illiberal and deſtructive ſpirit of national prejudices and party feuds, muſt have an evident and natural tendency to increaſe the proſperity and augment the power of both countries. With reſpect to the permanent ſecurity of Ireland, there can, I believe, ariſe no doubt on that topic. We have ſeen Ireland diſtracted and torn by domeſtic treachery, and expoſed to the danger of foreign invaſion. We have ſeen the military force of Great Britain, not required by the Conſtitution, interfere with ardour, and acquire true glory in reſtoring the tranquillity of that country. We have ſeen and admired the gallantry, courage, and perſeverance of Volunteers and Yeomanry, who, by their patriotic exertions, have deſerved every thing that has been ſaid in praiſe of their heroic ardour, and of whom it might be juſtly ſaid, that they deſerve to be in reality the brethren of Britons. But the very extent of the difficulties in which we have been engaged, has carried along with it their

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cure. It never has happened that Great Britain has ſo truly flouriſhed, as when attacked in Ireland, and when that country was threatened with the friendſhip and bleſſings of French fraternity. If the danger were leſs marked, and the criſis leſs deciſive, would the ſame means have been in our power? It is then to the ſpirited perſeverance of Ireland, ſeconded by the gallant exertions of this country, that we are indebted for our common preſervation and preſent ſafety; and is not this a weighty motive in us both to improve and perpetuate the eſtabliſhed connection between us? What, Sir, is the effectual cure for ſuch dangers hereafter, but to blend the people of that kingdom with ourſelves, to identify them with ourſelves, to make them ſhare all the advantages which we enjoy in peace and in war, to inſpire a generous emulation into the whole, and to enable them to participate in all the reſources and in all the bleſſings of this nation, permanent as we are in every acquirement that can diſtinguiſh and exalt a country? I do not heſitate to ſay, that the man who does not at once perceive the beneficial effects of this great plan, muſt be blind to every conſideration of the moſt oſtenſible importance and neceſſity. If therefore it comes to us ſo ſtrongly recommended, what are we to look to next? We muſt look to the internal ſtate of Ireland. I know that any attempt on our part to arrogate the right of judging of the claims of contending ſects, what the Proteſtants may think proper to grant, or what the Catholics may think juſt to demand, is improper. I diſclaim all right to any interference with reſpect to the internal regulations and arrangements of an independent country. Yet we cannot be altogether blind to what paſſes there, more immediately when we conſider it as an aſſailable point. Whoever upon that ground looks upon all the miſeries which have happened there—whoever reflects on all thoſe lamentable but neceſſary ſeverities which have been exerciſed, and have been in fact aggravations of the guilt of the offenders—whoever was convinced of the calamitous ſtate of the people in general; of the want of improvement and refinement in manners; of the unequal diſtribution of property; of the diſtraction of religious ſects; of the rooted animoſity that has deſcended from generation to generation, and ſtill ſubſiſts between the native Iriſh and Britiſh ſettlers; of the want of capital, ſo neceſſary to promote the extenſion of commerce, muſt alſo be convinced of the neceſſity of the preſent plan. But how much more forcibly muſt that conviction be, when to all theſe irreſiſtible motives are added the poiſonous principles of Jacobiniſm, the deadly ſpirit of innovation and anarchy, undermining the ſmall portion of happineſs left, and converting into the inſtruments of deſpotiſm a people deluded with the mockery and cant of French liberty!

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Such, Sir, is the unhappy ſtate of that country which we have ſo much reaſon to deplore; and ſhall we heſitate to apply as far as we can go, a remedy we have the moſt ſubſtantial reaſons to deem deciſive? I do not believe the Hon. Gentleman is likely to enter into a vindication of a ſituation of ſuch complicated horror and diſtreſs. I know no remedy for theſe evils but an Imperial legiſlation, to allay diſtraction, to heal the wounds of inteſtine faction, to reſtore general peace and domeſtic comfort. And looking at Ireland ſeparately, we cannot ſpeak of it but as a part of the whole empire. We cannot, conſidering its intimate relation to ourſelves, ſpeak of it but as true Iriſhmen: nor can the people of that country ſpeak of us on the ſame principle but as true Engliſhmen. But, Sir, if it were even poſſible to ſeparate the conſideration, which I completely deny—I ſay, even in that caſe, that it would be for the ſake of Ireland itſelf to apply that remedy in conjunction with Great Britain, which alone can reſtore it to the enjoyment of national happineſs and domeſtic comfort. If the want of improvement, and of all thoſe bleſſings which have been enumerated, is granted, where is the remedy to be found but in an Union? What is the ſituation of the Proteſtants and Catholics now? The Proteſtants may ſay, that any conceſſion to the Catholics will threaten the Proteſtant aſcendancy with ruin: the Catholics, on the other hand, are ſo ſuperior in number, that a ſtate of fear prevails on one ſide, and a ſtate of diſquiet and diſcontent on the other. Such is the ſituation as to render it a delicate and dangerous topic to diſcuſs. The Religion of the State is on one hand, that of the bulk of the people on the other, and the property of the country in the hands of the ſmaller number. It muſt unqueſtionably be a very excellent and ſtrong ſyſtem that can provide for all the defects of ſuch a ſtate. Diſtracted as it is with the agitation and inflammation of religious opinion, it may probably be for ſome years the ſubject of diſcord. I believe no man will ſay that a full conceſſion to the Roman Catholics of their claims can take place in the actual ſituation of the kingdom. I beg leave to ſay, Sir, that I am now deprecating any diſcuſſion upon that point, but I have no difficulty in ſaying, that two propoſitions with reſpect to that ſubject are, in my opinion, indiſputable. And I do not heſitate to aſſert, that if ever the day ſhould come in which it would be thought juſt and expedient to admit them to the full participation of all the privileges enjoyed by their fellow-ſubjects; ſuch a meaſure would, in the United Parliament, be free from every prejudice and party motive which might be ſuppoſed muſt prevail in the Parliament of Ireland. An impartial Legiſlation, far enough removed from the ſcene of contention to act as the

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common parent of all, and influenced only by the dictates of temper, candour, moderation, and ſtrict attention to the reſpective claims of the different parties, and to the common intereſts of the whole empire, would be better adapted to decide than any other aſſembly. If the Legiſlature were not local, but impartial, the Catholics and Proteſtants would conſequently be in the judgment of men diveſted of every prejudice, and intent only upon promoting and eſtabliſhing on a ſatisfactory and permanent baſis the rights of the various claimants. But, Sir, whenever that time ſhall ariſe, the queſtion of conceſſion will be perfectly free from every local conſideration, and the Catholics will be put under the imperial protection of an unprejudiced Legiſlature. It may then become a queſtion, whether the payment of tythes, and the payment of their own Miniſters, may not be altered. I merely ſtate theſe matters as ſubjects of fair and impartial conſideration. I ſhall now, Sir, take a more particular view of the benefits which will reſult to Ireland from an incorporate Union with Great Britain.—The firſt great and ſolid gain which will ariſe to the ſiſter kingdom, will be the ſecure and permanent preſervation, by an unalterable compact, of all thoſe commercial advantages which Ireland now holds at the diſcretion of Great Britain, and by a tenure which muſt always be conſidered contingent and precarious: and here, Sir, it will be impoſſible for me to follow a better guide than that Hon. Gentleman, whom I have had ſo frequent occaſion to quote, and who ſo ſtrenuouſly urged the commercial propoſitions of 1789 in the Iriſh Parliament. [Here Mr. Pitt read a paſſage from Mr. Foſter's Speech upon the mutual exports of the two countries, ſtating thoſe of Ireland from Great Britain in the year 1785 at one million, and thoſe of this country from Ireland at two millions and one half, and repreſenting the certain continuance of that and all the commercial advantages Ireland enjoyed as entirely dependent upon the adoption of ſome ſuch propoſitions as were then made.] Such, Sir, were the ſentiments, at that period, of this Hon. Gentleman, who has ſince repreſented a final adjuſtment of a more liberal and extenſively beneficial nature than that which he then ſo vehemently preſſed upon his countrymen, as tending to aboliſh for ever all the advantages which they now poſſeſs. So far, indeed, was he then from entertaining any of thoſe apprehenſions which has induced him to reject the preſent propoſitions, that we find him telling his co-legiſlators, that the ſecure enjoyment of their own fortunes depended on their embracing the opportunity which was then offered to them, of participating in the commerce and proſperity of Great Britain upon a firm

and permanent baſis. I do not mean, Sir, to reſt the merits of the preſent meaſure upon arguments uſed at a diſtance of ſeveral years, becauſe I know that it may be ſaid, the circumſtances which warranted theſe may have ſince totally changed; though I cannot ſee what change of circumſtances ſhould juſtify ſo diametrical an oppoſition of opinion, as that of the Hon. Gentleman I allude to. An alteration of circumſtances has certainly taken place, but it is ſuch, Sir, as gives ſtill greater weight to all the arguments which he uſed, ſo far as the commercial intereſts of Ireland were concerned. This will be immediately obvious from a ſhort ſtatement of her commerce as it now ſtands with this country; and here, Sir, I ſhall again refer to the words of the ſame perſon for the ſtate of the argument as it relates to the articles of which the exports and imports are compoſed, and which I the more willingly refer to on account of their peculiar conciſeneſs and force. I have already ſaid that he ſtates the total amount of imports from Great Britain in 1785 at 2,500,000l. and that of the exports to this country at one million. In this comparative eſtimate, he juſtly obſerves, that almoſt every article of Iriſh produce is imported into this country duty free, while there is ſcarcely one article of Britiſh produce or manufacture, upon which a duty is not levied on its importation into Ireland, though nearly one half of the whole of our exports to that kingdom conſiſt of articles of indiſpenſable neceſſity—of ſalt, for carrying on their fiſheries; of hops, which the Iriſh cannot grow; and coals, which they have not yet been able to raiſe in ſufficient quantity for general ſupply. But, Sir, if the hon. Gentleman whom I have mentioned, then ſaw how much the commerce of Ireland depended upon the free will and generoſity of this country, and thence recommended with an earneſtneſs proportionate to his conviction of the truth, that the Iriſh Legiſlature ſhould cloſe with the terms then held out to them, how much more zealouſly ſhould he inculcate the ſame ſentiments, when the preſent ſtate of commerce between the two countries is fairly balanced! As far as reſpects the interchange of manufactures, this country does not at this moment export to Ireland much more than one million ſterling yearly, whilſt the articles which ſhe imports from it, amount to between four and five millions, almoſt all of which, as I have already obſerved, are duty free; and upon every one of them have we given her a preference over every other nation, and in many inſtances over our own manufacturers. Four-fifths of her whole commerce is conſumed by ourſelves; and yet, ſir, ſuch is the country which has been taught to depend for the continuation and extenſion of commercial bleſſings excluſively upon its own Legiſlature,

giſlature, while their exiſtence for a moment is in almoſt every branch dependant upon the generous diſcretion of that of Great Britain. We have not only exempted its linens fromany duty on importation, but have ſecured them a double market by granting a bounty on their re-exportation, while we have prevented the competition ariſing from the cheapneſs of the linen manufactures of the Continent by ſubjecting their importation to a duty of 30 per cent. It is to theſe ſacrifices, Sir, upon the part of the Britiſh Legiſlature, that the people of Ireland are indebted for a branch of their exportation, which amounts to three millions a year. I do not mean, Sir, to arraign the propriety and wiſdom of theſe ſacrifices; but at a time when they are ſuppoſed to flow not from the affectionate conceſſions of the people of this country, but from a ſource entirely independent of their influence, I think it is no more than juſt to ſhew that we have made ſuch ſacrifices. The loſs which the Britiſh revenue annually ſuſtains by foregoing the duties upon Iriſh linens, which are levied upon thoſe of other nations, cannot be eſtimated at leſs than 700.000 l. andif the cheap rate at which foreign linens could be brought into our market, were it not for the heavy duty to which it is ſubject, be taken into account, it will be found that the real annual ſacrifice which we make in favour of this branch of Iriſh manufacture, is very moderately ſtated at one million. Yet this is one of thoſe advantages, ſir, of which the complete confirmation is by one ſet of men looked upon as pregnant with the moſt deſtructive conſequences. But, Sir, I am happy to find myſelf again ſupported by the ſentiments which one of thoſe perſons, to whom I have repeatedly alluded, formerly delivered upon this ſubject, in maintaining that a free communication between the two countries muſt ultimately be productive of incalculable benefits to both, and that a perfect freedom from taxes ſhould be granted to the manufacturers of each, by which every branch of trade would find its true level, and capital be more productively employed to the ſeparate advantage of each, and to increaſing the power and riches of the whole. I have alſo the ſatisfaction to find that the objections which are now ſo warmly urged, in reference to the ſuppoſed injury to the commerce of Ireland, were refuted in 1784, by the ſame perſon, and with his uſual force of argument. He obſerved, that Ireland having as good a climate, and being in every reſpect as favourably ſituated for commerce as England, while her taxes were much lighter, when, by the extinction of the rivalſhip now exiſting between them, trade ſhould be permitted to take its natural courſe, it muſt rapidly riſe in opulence and grandeur. It appears, therefore, Sir, to have been the opinion of

ar able Stateſman, intimately acquainted with every branch of the commercial intereſts of his native country, that the ſyſtem which I conceive to be moſt neceſſary for ſettling the connexion of Great Britain and Ireland upon a baſis of unalterable ſecurity, muſt be eminently advantageous to the latter. I do not conceive, Sir, that by agreeing in this obſervation, I ſhall excite any alarm in the minds of the people of this country. I am convinced that they feel every diſpoſition to admit their brethren of Ireland to a ſhare in all the proud diſtinctions which they enjoy above every other nation, and that they would have no reluctance to communicate a portion of their wealth, if they could be ſure that what they poured into the lap of Ireland would redound to the general happineſs and ſtrength of the Britiſh Empire, inſtead of being transferred into the ſcale of their enemy. It is from my perfect conviction that ſuch is the temper of all the enlightened portion of my countrymen—from a full belief that if thoſe jealouſies which have ſo long, and ſo unhappily, ſubſiſted between the two countries were finally extinguiſhed, that a participation of every bleſſing which they poſſeſs themſelves, would be cheerfully granted to the ſiſter kingdom—that I for one will never be deterred from making every experiment ſhort of the laſt extremity, to effect a meaſure ſo eſſential to the intereſts of both. That fatal extremity, Sir, I hope never will arrive; nothing that temper and conciliation can effect will be wanting on the part of this country to prevent it; and if ever it ſhould arrive, it will be entirely owing to the blind counſels of thoſe who may unfortunately have the management of the affairs of the ſiſter kingdom. Of the conciliatory diſpoſition of the Britiſh Parliament, every act that it has paſſed with reſpect to Ireland for a ſeries of years, affords multiplied proof; and the people of Ireland muſt be ſenſible, Sir, that whatever advantages they at this moment poſſeſs, are all originally derived from the Britiſh Legiſlature, and not from the independent Legiſlature of their own country. Thus, Sir, have I endeavoured to give an outline of the important conſiderations which ought to induce the Parliaments of both kingdoms to deliberate on the beſt means of effecting the object recommended in his Majeſty's Meſſage, and ſlightly touched in my progreſs upon the various objections to it which may have ariſen from political or commercial jealouſies. I am aware, however, that in addition to thoſe which I have ſtated and refuted, and which ariſe in a great meaſure out of the detail of the contending intereſts which are to be reconciled, objections of greater magnitude have been urged, and unfortunately with too much ſucceſs in the ſiſter country. The firſt, and the moſt

important,

important, is that which queſtions the competency of the Legiſlature of Ireland to entertain the diſcuſſion in any ſhape. But upon this I ſhall not enlarge at preſent, as there will be an opportunity of diſtinctly arguing its merits in the courſe of this night, or on any other, if the Honourable Gentleman oppoſite ſhould be diſpoſed to preſs it. I believe, however, that on more deliberate reflection, neither he nor any other perſon within theſe walls will aſſert that the Iriſh Parliament is incompetent to the queſtion; unleſs he means to do one of two things—to diſtinguiſh the authority of the independent and coequal Legiſlature of Ireland from that of the Parliament of Great Britain, and thus while he inveſts it with a ſacred character, diveſt it at the ſame time of the characteriſtic functions of a Parliament—or, unleſs he be prepared equally to deny the competence of the Parliament of Great Britain. If he maintains the latter alternative, then, Sir, I will contend that he might at the ſame time deny the validity of the Union between England and Scotland—he muſt deny the authority by which we now ſit—he muſt invalidate every law which we or our anceſtors have enacted—and from an unreſtrained application of the ſame principle, every great tranſaction in our hiſtory on which the power of Parliament has been exerciſed, and every maxim upon which he himſelf has acted in his capacity of a legiſlator. I will explain myſelf, Sir, a little farther:—I ſay, that if freſh delegated powers from the conſtituent be neceſſary upon every occaſion, when it is propoſed to alter any part of the conſtitution, then muſt the incorporation of Wales, and the counties Palatine, and the Union with Scotland, have been groſs violations of the conſtitution, and totally deſtitute of legal validity. I muſt apply the ſame principle in a more ſpecial manner to every law which regulates the various qualifications of our electors—to that, for inſtance, which requires that an elector for a county ſhall be poſſeſſed of a freehold of 40s. a year; and in the ſame manner with reſpect to all the charters on which are founded the ſeveral modifications of the elective franchiſe throughout the whole country. If he look to Ireland he will find a ſtill ſtronger inſtance to illuſtrate the abſurdity of ſuch a poſition. Is there any one, Sir, who doubts the competence of a proteſtant parliament choſen by proteſtant electors, who poſſeſs almoſt the whole property of the kingdom, to emancipate, and aſſimilate to themſelves the great body of the catholics? And ſhall it be ſaid to be a greater ſtretch of power to aſſociate itſelf with another kingdom poſſeſſing the ſame laws and the ſame religion? Or referring to a ſubject which has of late years been much agitated within this Houſe, I mean that of Reform, I will aſk, whether

ther at the time of their diſcuſſing that queſtion, any of the Gentlemen oppoſite to me entertained any doubt that they had not legal power to diſfranchiſe thoſe who had ſent them into this Houſe, and to enfranchiſe thoſe who had not ſent them? I will deny, Sir, that ſovereignty can exiſt in any country ſeparate from its Legiſlature, or that notwithſtanding the exiſtence of a ſupreme Legiſlative Body, the controuling ſovereign power, in the modern interpretation of it, remains in abeyance in the great maſs of its ſubjects. This doctrine, Sir, is the fertile ſource of all the miſchiefs which have convulſed the civilized world to its center, and which, wherever it has ſpread, has involved both Government and People in one chaos of miſery. I confeſs, Sir, that it has been the ſubject of much anxiety to thoſe who have had the arduous taſk of conducting the affairs of this country at a period beyond example critical and dangerous; and it is not without concern that I perceive it brought forward in a more latent form, after being foiled in its open undiſguiſed attack. It is untrue, Sir, that any national aſſemblage of men can exiſt under Heaven, without delegating a ſupreme unlimited power to their Government. The queſtion whether that Government exceeds the powers neceſſary to the preſervation of ſociety, or abuſes it to its diſſolution, is a queſtion of perilous reſponſibility, too delicate to come within the code of human regulation, or form a chapter of human juriſprudence. The next obſtacle, Sir, which has been thrown in the way of identifying the intereſts and exiſtence of the two countries, ariſes from an erroneous national pride. Upon this ſubject an appeal has been deluſively made to the quick feelings of a nation diſtinguiſhed for its high ſenſe of honour. It has been told, that no compenſation can be made to them for the ſurrender of their independence. I am really deſirous that Gentlemen would diſpaſſionately examine the principle upon which this objection is grounded. Do they mean to ſay that any ſociety of men, comprized within a given local diſtrict, who are deſirous to enlarge their ſphere, by uniting themſelves with other ſocieties of the ſame deſcription upon equal terms, are by the very act of Union leſs members of an independent community, or leſs in poſſeſſion of all the privileges which they formerly enjoyed, whether civil, political, or religious? Let us trace the hiſtory of thoſe nations of Europe who exult moſt in the pride of independence, and we ſhall eaſily be convinced that they never could have attained that lofty eminence of glory which they now enjoy, if their fore-fathers had acted upon thoſe narrow principles—Europe, Sir, would have ſtill remained a prey to all the miſeries of ſanguinary warfare and

barbarous

barbarous anarchy, which are peculiarly incident to petty States." Mr. Pitt then touched upon the peculiar circumſtance of the relative ſituation of Great Britain and Ireland, which rendered a Union deſirable between the two countries—the unity of their eſtabliſhed religion, the ſameneſs of their language, laws, and manners. He admitted that the number of abſentees would be increaſed by it, but contended that the advantages accruing from the influx of Britiſh capital would more than countervail all the inconveniences that could be urged againſt it.—"The ſame clamour which had been raiſed againſt it in Dublin, prevailed in Edinburgh againſt the Union with Scotland; yet the population and wealth of the latter was more than doubled ſince that period, and the increaſe of Glaſgow in both thoſe reſpects was in the proportion of ſix to one. It had been argued, that after an Union the commercial privileges of Ireland would be more inſecure than at preſent; but he had already proved that all her preſent advantages flowed from the generous acts of the Britiſh Parliament; and it was as futile to ſuppoſe, that, after an Union, they would make any more diſtinction between the Commerce of Great Britain and Ireland, than they now do between the intereſts of Lancaſhire and Yorkſhire. But this apprehenſion, and that of Ireland being ſubjected to an unequal taxation, was practically obviated, by reviewing the conduct which England had held towards Scotland. As in the Union with the latter, he ſhould propoſe, that the Revenue to be raiſed in Ireland ſhould be in a certain limited proportion for a number of years. He ſhould now proceed to read a ſeries of reſolutions, upon the general principles which he had developed. It was his wiſh that they ſhould be deliberately examined in a Committee of the whole Houſe; and if upon due inveſtigation they ſhould be adopted, he thought it would be adviſable to lay them before the Crown, ſtating their object in ſolemnly recording them, and leaving it to his Majeſty to communicate them to his Parliament of Ireland, when to his wiſdom it ſhould ſeem meet."

The Reſolutions were then read, to the following purport:

I. THAT in order to promote and ſecure the eſſential Intereſts of Great Britain and Ireland, and to conſolidate the Stength, Power, and Reſources of the Britiſh Empire, It will be adviſable to concur in ſuch Meaſures as may beſt tend to unite the Two Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland into One Kingdom, in ſuch Manner, and on ſuch Terms and Conditions, as may be eſtabliſhed by Acts of the reſpective Parliaments of His Majeſty's ſaid Kingdoms.

II. That it would be fit to propoſe, as the Firſt Article, to ſerve as a Baſis of the ſaid Union, That the ſaid Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland ſhall, upon a Day to be agreed upon, be united into One Kingdom, by the Name of "The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland."

III.

III. That for the ſame Purpoſe it would be fit to propoſe That the Succeſſion to the Monarchy and the Imperial Crown of the ſaid United Kingdom ſhall continue limited and ſettled in the ſame Manner as the Imperial Crown of the ſaid Kingdoms of Great Britain and Ireland now ſtands limited and ſettled, according to the exiſting Laws, and to the Terms of the Union between England and Scotland*.

IV. That for the ſame purpoſe it would be fit to propoſe, That the ſaid United Kingdom be repreſented in One and the ſame Parliament, to be ſtiled "The Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland;" and that ſuch a Number of Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and ſuch a Number of Members in the Houſe of Commons, as ſhall be hereafter agreed upon by Acts of the reſpective Parliaments as aforeſaid, ſhall ſit and vote in the ſaid Parliament on the Part of Ireland, and ſhall be ſummoned, choſen, and returned in ſuch Manner as ſhall be fixed by an Act of Parliament of Ireland previous to the ſaid Union; and that every Member hereafter to ſit and vote in the ſaid Parliament of the United Kingdom, ſhall, until the ſaid Parliament ſhall otherwiſe provide, take and ſubſcribe the ſame Oaths, and make the ſame Declarations, as are by Law required to be taken, ſubſcribed, and made by the Members of the Parliaments of Great Britain and Ireland.

V. That for the ſame Purpoſe it would be fit to propoſe, That the Churches of England and Ireland, and the Doctrine, Worſhip, Diſcipline, and Government thereof, ſhall be preſerved as now by Law eſtabliſhed.

VI. That for the ſame Purpoſe it would be fit to propoſe, That His Majeſty's Subjects in Ireland ſhall at all times hereafter be entitled to the ſame Privileges, and be on the ſame Footing, in reſpect of Trade and Navigation, in all Ports and Places belonging to Great Britain, and in all Caſes with reſpect to which Treaties ſhall be made by His Majeſty, His Heirs or Succeſſors, with any Foreign Power, as His Majeſty's Subjects in Great Britain:—That no Duty ſhall be impoſed on the Import or Export between Great Britain and Ireland of any Articles now Duty free; and that on other Articles there ſhall be eſtabliſhed, for a Time to be limited, ſuch a moderate Rate of equal Duties as ſhall, previous to the Union, be agreed upon and approved by the reſpective Parliaments; ſubject, after the Expiration of ſuch limited Time, to be diminiſhed equally with reſpect to both Kingdoms, but in no Caſe to be encreaſed:—That all Articles which may at any Time hereafter be imported into Great Britain from Foreign Parts, ſhall be importable through either Kingdom into the other, ſubject to the like Duties and Regulations as if the ſame were imported directly from Foreign Parts:—That where any Articles, the Growth, Produce, or Manufacture of either Kingdom, are ſubject to any internal Duty in one Kingdom, ſuch countervailing Duties (over and above any Duties on Import to be fixed as aforeſaid ſhall be impoſed as ſhall be neceſſary to prevent any Inequality in that Reſpect:—And that all other Matters of Trade and Commerce, other than the foregoing, and than ſuch others as may, before the Union, be ſpecially agreed upon for the due Encouragement of the Agriculture and Manufactures of the reſpective Kingdoms, ſhall remain to be regulated from Time to Time by the United Parliament.

VII. That for the ſame Purpoſe it would be fit to propoſe, That the Charge ariſing from the Payment of the Intereſt or Sinking Fund for the Reduction of the Principal, of the Debt incurred in either Kingdom before the Union, ſhall continue to be ſeparately defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland reſpectively:—That, for a Number of Years to be limited, the future Ordinary Expences of the United Kingdom, in Peace or War, ſhall be defrayed by Great Britain and Ireland jointly, according to ſuch Proportions as ſhall be eſtabliſhed by the reſpective Parliaments previous to the Union; and that, after the Expiration of the Time to be ſo limited, the Proportion ſhall not be liable to be varied, except according to ſuch Rules and Principles as ſhall be in like manner agreed upon previous to the Union.

VIII. That for the ſame Purpoſe it would be fit to propoſe, That all Laws in force at the Time of the Union, and all the Courts of Civil or Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction within the reſpective Kingdoms, ſhall remain as now by Law eſtabliſhed within the ſame; ſubject only to ſuch Alterations or Regulations from Time to Time as Circumſtances may appear, to the Parliament of the United Kingdom, to require.

* *See De Foe's Hiſtory of the Union.*

HOUSE

HOUSE OF COMMONS OF IRELAND,

August 12, 1785.

———*The Chancellor of the Exchequer* [Mr. FOSTER] ſeconded the motion *, and reſumed. To ſuch wretched ſhifts are gentlemen driven, who attempt to ſupport what is not ſupportable, and would vainly endeavour to perſuade you that this meaſure trenches on the independence of our legiſlature; you need not adopt any laws that Great Britain may paſs for the regulation of commerce; if you do not approve them, you may reject them whenever you think proper; you do but reject the benefit of the condition, and return to the ſituation in which you now are; but the ſame Member has proved moſt ſtrongly the neceſſity of introducing the Bill, for when ſuch abilities as his can totally miſconceive its tendency, it ought to be introduced in order to be fully underſtood. He has obſerved largely on each Propoſition, and nothing was ever ſo miſſtated, miſrepreſented and miſunderſtood, as every part of them has been by him. It would be abſurd to follow him through all his errors, many of them the moſt ignorant child would be aſhamed to advance; but I will point out a few, not perhaps ſo obvious without examination.

Let me firſt take notice of his having alluded to me, and ſaid, that I voted againſt a declaration of Right. I deny it; I declared my opinion of the independence of our Legiſlature from this very ſeat, early in the debate on that day; but did *he* vote for it? *He did not*, and I repeat the Hon. Gentleman did not vote for it, but lamented that the ſubject had been brought in that day.

———I ſhall leave this ſubject as a leſſon to the Hon. Gentleman, never for the future to charge facts that are unfounded. I ſhall now proceed to the Hon. Gentleman's obſervations. He ſays, "mark the cunning with which the reſolutions "are drawn, to the injury of Ireland; there is no new prohi-"bition to be allowed on the import from one country to "another." This is certainly a great evil, eſpecially if we conſider that the Exportation of Iriſh products to England amounts to TWO MILLIONS and an HALF annually—and the Exportation of Britiſh products to Ireland amount but to ONE MILLION, ſo it is injurious to a country which may by prohibitions loſe two millions and an half, to ſtipulate againſt prohibitions, and the country that ſends more than ſhe takes, is not wiſe in guarding againſt mutual prohibition.

Another diſcovery the Hon. Gentleman has made is that countervailing duties are unfair—why? Becauſe the Brewery of Ireland will thereby be effectually protected. The Hon.

* "That leave be given to bring in a Bill, for effectuating the intercourſe and "commerce between Great Britain and Ireland, on permanent and equitable "principles, for the mutual benefit of both Kingdoms."

Gentleman complains of the Report of the Engliſh Privy Council, who ſay that to put Ireland and England on a footing of exact reciprocity as to linen, Ireland ought to give a bounty on the exportation of Engliſh Linens, becauſe England gives a bounty on the Exportation of Iriſh Linens. Can any thing be more juſt? Yet England makes no ſuch demand, but is ready by this adjuſtment to give additional ſecurity to our Linen trade for ever. If indeed the adjuſtment were to take away the benefit from Ireland, it would be a good cauſe for rejecting it; but as it for ever confirms all the advantages we derive from our Linen trade, and binds England from any law that can be injurious to it; ſurely Gentlemen who regard that trade, and whoſe fortunes and rent depend on its proſperity, will not entertain a moment's doubt about embracing the offer.

Another of his curious objections is, that as we have not a navy of our own, and if we aſſiſt the navy of the empire, England will turn that navy to her own ambitious purpoſes. To what ambitious purpoſes? To the protection of that commerce and of thoſe colonies which are now to become ours.—In the moment that ſhe gives up her monopoly of colonies, ſhe is accuſed of ambitious purpoſes, for her ſeparate aggrandizement.

The Hon. Gentleman complains, that the Bill now before the Engliſh Parliament makes it neceſſary that every proper and authentic document to prevent ſmuggling ſhould be ſent by the revenue officers of this country with any foreign or plantation goods ſent from hence to England, but that the ſame precaution is not taken with regard to the ſame kind of goods ſent from England to Ireland. This is the ſtrongeſt argument for waiting the introduction of the Iriſh Bill; it ſpeaks the conſciouſneſs of the Engliſh Parliament, that they could not preſcribe to our revenue officers what documents ſhould be ſatisfactory to them on receiving goods from England, but that the Iriſh Parliament alone in their own Bill, could determine that matter. It ſhews the Hon. Gentleman to be totally ignorant of what either is or ought to be the ſubſtance of the Bill.

The Hon. Gentleman talks of bounties, and ſays, by aboliſhing bounties, we ſhall no longer be able to bring corn to this city; our inland corn bounties, he ſays, are to be turned into protecting Duties for England. A ſtrange conception! But why has he fixed on corn and flour? If he had read the Reſolution on which he is arguing, he would have ſeen that corn and flour are every where exempted.

Another argument of the Hon. Gentleman is, that the declaring that neither country hereafter can lay any new prohibition on native productions, implies cunningly that it may on

foreign. What an argument! when the very firſt principle of the ſyſtem is, that a mutual interchange of foreign commodities is for ever to take place between the two kingdoms, and one even of the Twenty Propoſitions declares it in preciſe terms—But, the Hon. Gentleman talks of prohibitions on exports, &c.; Would the Hon. Gentleman wiſh to leave it in the power of either nation to prohibit their native commodities from being exported to the other? Would he wiſh to leave it in the power of England to prohibit the exportation of coals, ſalt, iron, bark, hops, and many other articles, or to raiſe a revenue on theſe articles when exported hither?

The Hon. Gentleman talks particularly of wool. I admit, if you balance wool againſt wool, that his argument is right; but the juſt way is to balance the whole of the exports;—England engages never to prohibit the export of articles which are neceſſary almoſt to our exiſtence, and we engage not to prohibit the exportation of articles which bring us in 500,000l. a year. We are to engage not to prohibit the export of Woollen and Linen Yarn, which we have exported for a whole century, and without keeping a market for the redundancy of which by export, we could *not* enſure plenty for our own manufacturers.

The Gentleman too, totally miſtates the caſe of patents and copy-rights. Britiſh patents and copy-rights are protected in Britain by prohibition againſt import. The Reſolutions ſay to us, "protect your's in like manner;" a meaſure never yet adopted here, which muſt promote genius, printing, and invention in Ireland.

I am aſhamed, Sir, of taking up ſo much of your time on a ſubject which might be ſo eaſily underſtood by the loweſt capacity; I ſhall therefore quit the Hon. Gentleman and come to the queſtion of conſtitution, which I do not at all think involved in this ſubject. If Great Britain grants us a full partnerſhip in all her trade, in all her colonies, if ſhe admits us to a full participation in the benefits of her Navigation laws, by which ſhe has raiſed herſelf to be the greateſt commercial power in the world; if ſhe does not call upon us to contribute to the expence of the partnerſhip, but merely to receive the ſhare of the profits, and ſays, we may continue in that partnerſhip only ſo long as we chuſe, can any man ſay, the conditions of it amount to a ſurrender of our legiſlature? ſurely not, it is idle ſpeculation. Let us then look at the ſubject, free from all imaginary dread for the conſtitution.

Britain imports annually from us 2,500,000l. of our products, all, or very nearly all, duty free, and covenants never to lay a duty on them. We import about 1,000,000l. of hers, and raiſe a revenue on almoſt every article of it, and reſerve the power

of continuing that revenue. She exports to us ſalt for our fiſheries and proviſions; hops which we cannot grow; coals which we cannot raiſe; tin which we have not; and bark which we cannot get elſewhere; and all theſe without reſerving any duty, or a power to impoſe any on them; though her own ſubjects pay 2, 3, or 4s. a chaldron for her own coals, ſent coaſt-ways, and in London 7s. We on the contrary charge a duty for our own uſe here on almoſt every article we ſend to her. So much for exports; now as to bounties, ſhe almoſt ruined our manufacture of ſail-cloth, by bounties on export of her own to Ireland. In 1750, or thereabouts, when her bounty commenced, we exported more than we imported, and in 1784, we exported none, and imported 180,000 yards; ſhe now withdraws that bounty. And let me digreſs here a little on ſail-cloth, which although gentlemen affect to deſpiſe when mentioned, will I truſt be an immediate ſource of wealth by this adjuſtment. For 1. This bounty is to be removed. 2. The export of ſail-cloth to the Indies is to be allowed, and Great Britain exported there, in 1782, about 200,000 ells. 3. There is a Britiſh law, obliging every Britiſh and colony ſhip to have its firſt ſuits of Britiſh ſail-cloth. Iriſh now is to be deemed Britiſh. 4. There is a preference of 2d. an ell given by Britiſh law to Britiſh ſail-cloth, over foreign, for the Britiſh navy. Iriſh is now to have the ſame preference. 5. The ſurplus of the hereditary revenue is to be applied in the firſt place to the purchaſe of Iriſh ſail-cloth. All theſe give a glorious proſpect for that valuable manufacture—But to return, were a man to look for the country moſt advantageous to ſettle manufacture in, what would be his choice? One where labour and proviſions are cheap, that is Ireland; and what would he next look for? —why to have a rich, extended and ſtately market near him, which England, ſtretched along ſide affords, and to eſtabliſh that market for this country is one great object of this ſyſtem. Gentlemen undervalue the reduction of Britiſh duties on our manufactures; I agree with them it may not operate ſoon, but we are to look forward in a final ſettlement, and it is impoſſible but that in time, with as good climate, equal natural powers, cheaper food, and fewer taxes, we muſt be able to ſell to them. When commercial jealouſy ſhall be baniſhed by final ſettlement, and trade takes its natural and ſteady courſe, the kingdoms will ceaſe to look to rivalſhip, each will make that fabric which it can do cheapeſt, and buy from the other what it cannot make ſo advantageouſly. Labour will be then truly employed to profit, not diverted by duties, bounties, jealouſies or legiſlative interference from its natural and beneficial courſe, this ſyſtem will attain its real object, conſolidating the ſtrength of the remaining parts of the empire, by encouraging the communi-

cations of their market among themſelves, with preference to every part againſt all ſtrangers.

I need not mention the Navigation-act, the proper benefits of which we have ſo long looked for; I will only obſerve, that Great Britain could never agree to receive the Britiſh Colonies' goods from us, unleſs we prohibited the goods of foreign Colonies as ſhe does, which is a powerful argument for that part of the ſyſtem againſt the conſtitutional phrenſy that threatens it. Let us alſo obſerve, that now, for the firſt time, Great Britain offers us a right for ever in all preſent and future Colonies, without any reſervation of power, to call on us either to procure, ſupport, or preſerve them; *ſhe* maintains them, *we* ſhare all the profits; and, not only their goods, but all goods of Iriſh produce, are to paſs through Britain duty free. Can foreign nations, after this is ſettled, make diſtinction between Britiſh and Iriſh goods? Our manufactures will be united as our intereſts, and we ſhall laugh at Portugal folly.

I could run out for hours into the many benefits of this ſyſtem, but I have tired the Houſe too long; let me only implore you not to reject this meaſure, for ill-founded, viſionary objections, or to ſacrifice realities to ſhadows. If this infatuated country gives up the preſent offer, ſhe may look for it again in vain; things cannot remain as they are; commercial jealouſy is rouſed, it will encreaſe with two independent legiſlatures, if they do not mutually declare the principles whereby their powers ſhall be ſeparately employed, in directing the common concerns of trade; and without an united intereſt of commerce, in a commercial empire, political union will receive many ſhocks, and ſeparation of intereſts muſt threaten ſeparation of connexion, which every honeſt Iriſhman muſt ſhudder ever to look at as a poſſible event.

I will only add, that if this meaſure be refuſed, Ireland will receive more ſolid injury than from any other evil that ever befel her; it is in vain for Gentlemen to think we can go on as we have done for ſome years—or to expect to cope with England in a deſtructive war of bounties—our ſituation muſt every day become more difficult, and it is impoſſible to foreſee all the ruinous conſequences that may enſue.

AUGUST 15th, 1785.

Right Hon. Chancellor of the Exchequer [Mr. FOSTER.] I riſe to ſtate the miſconception of the Right Hon. Gentleman, and if any thing can ſhew the neceſſity of curing the people of their infatuation, by publiſhing and explaining the Bill to them, it ſurely is this, that a Gentleman to whom they look up, and juſtly look, as one whoſe wiſdom and virtue will guard their rights, is ſo very much miſtaken.

The Right Hon. Gentleman in his argument has never once adverted to the Bill on your table, but draws all his concluſions

from arguments raiſed by his own imagination, on the Britiſh Reſolutions. He dwells now only on foreign Colony trade and Navigation laws; the accepting a full participation of the Britiſh Colony trade, upon terms of equal laws, he gives up as not altering our conſtitution, and he even agrees in the innocence of our declaring it as a principle of the treaty. In this he has ſhewn his wiſdom, for it is already declared in the law of Ireland. The objection then ſtands as to a foreign Colony trade, and what ſays the Bill? it declares it to be a condition of the treaty, to protect that trade, in the ſame manner as Britain does, againſt the interference of foreign Colony goods. It enacts nothing, and there is the mighty evil which we have introduced, that is to give to Britain the regulation of all our foreign trade with Portugal, with Spain, with all the world. If the Gentleman ſo egregiouſly miſtakes the purport of what he has not read, I truſt the good ſenſe of the nation will ſee his miſtakes and judge for themſelves; but the objections to an agreement of rating only the goods from foreign Colonies, ſo far only as by protecting our Colonies againſt them, is not ſo wonderful from him, as his objection to the Bill's affecting Navigation and Britiſh ſeamen in general; from him I ſay, for in the year 1782, the Right Hon. Gentleman introduced, in conjunction with the late Chief Baron Burgh, and the preſent Chief Baron Yelverton, a Bill, adopting in the groſs all ſuch clauſes and proviſions of the laws theretofore paſſed in England, as conveyed equal benefits and impoſed equal reſtrictions in commerce, in the moſt extended ſenſe, to the ſubjects of both countries, and alſo putting the ſeamen of Ireland on the footing of Britiſh ſeamen. [*The Chancellor here read the words.*] The Bill now brought in does not go ſo far; he went to commerce in general, and adopted laws without reference to them, or even reciting their title. What does this Bill do? it declares with him the principle; it does no more. The Bill declares for a *ſimilarity of laws, manners,* and *cuſtoms,* in toto. Our Bill declares for a ſimilarity of Navigation laws, on our accepting the benefit of the Britiſh, now for the firſt time offered to us. It is idle to believe, even his authority can have weight in ſuch unfounded objections: nay, *our* Bill reaches *his,* to adopt its principles, and he ſays ours is miſchievous; his was the glory of the nation, and the joint labour of the greateſt friends of liberty.

The Right Hon. Gentleman ſays, "we might have foreign "trade, without entering into the meaſure, and that England, "as to foreign trade, gives us no right which we already have "not." As to colony trade, he ſays, "ſhe gives us what we "had before, on the former conditions, that we give her Co-"lony product a preference in our market, and therefore, he "ſays, cannot we remain as we now are."

With reſpect to the Colony Trade, I anſwer, we hold it by the gift of Britain, and ſhe may repeal her act, and reaſſume her monopoly. As to foreign trade, I have ſhewn it is no way affected, except by the preference to be given to Britiſh Colony goods, againſt thoſe of foreign Colonies; but why does the gentleman allude to Portugal? it is the ſtrongeſt meaſure againſt him. Portugal has preſumed to diſtinguiſh between the goods of Great Britain and the goods of Ireland—ſhe will not receive the latter. But if this ſettlement is entered into, all our goods ſhe can have may go duty free through Britain. The diſtinction between Britiſh and Iriſh manufacture is loſt as to foreign nations, our goods, are made one, phyſically as well as politically, in reſpect to foreign, and our union cemented by the freedom of intercourſe.

The honourable gentleman ſeems, with others, to undervalue the Britiſh markets for our linens, and that if Britain ſhall diſcourage her import, they will find vent elſewhere. I will not pay him ſo fulſome a compliment as to ſay he underſtands commerce, his genius ſoars perhaps above ſuch reading; but if he did underſtand it, I would aſk him, where would he expect a market to favour the linens of Ireland? Where will he find a market under Heaven for that manufacture, which now brings two millions annually into the kingdom? Will Portugal take them? Will Spain take them? Will France take them? No; we know they will not. Will Ruſſia, Germany, or Holland take them? They are your powerful rivals, and able to underſell you. Where then will you find a market, if England ſhuts her ports? Will you go to the Weſt Indies?—you cannot go to the Engliſh colonies—they will be like Britain—there you can have no admittance. The French, Spaniſh, and Portugueſe have ſhut their ports long ſince—your only market then is in the *bankrupt* States of North America, that have not money to pay their juſt debts, and many provinces of which, if they had the money, have not perhaps the honeſty to do it.

This bankrupt country is to give you the market Britain affords. No, no; cheriſh the market you have, you will never get ſo good, ſhe ever exports with bounty for you. And here let me obſerve the benefits of exporting, duty free, all our fabrics through her ports, which this ſettlement ſecures. You firſt found the way for your linens to foreign places through her ports, by her capitals and extent of dealing;—do not refuſe the like for your other fabrics—the proſperity of the linen ſhould teach you.

The gentleman ſays England is as dependant on Ireland as Ireland is on England for her products—he inſtances the cotton yarn and other yarn of Ireland. What, call cotton yarn a fabric of Ireland, and an export to Britain!—It is a miſtake of

his expreſſion, he cannot be ſo ignorant of our manufactures. Let us look into the wants Britain ſupplies—I will take coals firſt.

Do you think it an object of no conſequence to receive coals from England, for ever, duty free, while the duties on coals in England, brought from one of her own ports to another is very high? I remember when I propoſed a ſhilling a ton on the importation of coals into Dublin only, in order to raiſe a fund for extending and beautifying the city, it met with great oppoſition; I was abuſed in all the news-papers; yet now England may raiſe four times that ſum upon the export of her coals, which will fall upon the conſumer, and raiſe a revenue for her advantage; nay were ſhe even to raiſe the revenue on them to you that ſhe does on her own coaſt carriage, what would become of you? You have not Iriſh coal; if the preſent bounty of 2s. a ton to Dublin, added to 1s. 8d. duty on Britiſh, which operates as 3s. 8d. in favour of Iriſh coal, what will you do; becauſe no carriage can be ſo cheap to you as that acroſs the channel. Rock-ſalt is the next;—Where will you get it; (ſome one ſaid from Spain) Rock-ſalt from Spain! The Gentleman ſhould inform himſelf a little better.

As to the tanning trade, where will you get bark? From no place in the world but England. We know that it would not bear the freight from any other, and if England was to prohibit the export of it, that trade muſt be at an end; and we muſt not forget, that the Britiſh manufacturers of leather have already complained, that by getting bark from Wales, we are enabled to work on as good terms as England.

Let him look to hops; will this country grow them? On the other hand, what wants do we ſupply for England? wool and linen yarn, to our own great advantage; but it is in vain to proceed; the Houſe muſt ſee we are talking of a ſubject not yet underſtood; when known, and Ireland unprejudiced and in her calm reaſon, will never reject the many bleſſings it holds out to her trade;—it gives wealth and ſecurity which I truſt will never be refuſed from a wild imagination of Utopian Republics, Commonwealths, Monarchies—God knows what.

I will ſtand or fall with the Bill, that not a line in it touches your Conſtitution; it is now left to the deciſion of the country, it is not abandoned, God forbid it ſhould; and I truſt I ſhall ſee the nation aſk it at our hands, that we may be able then to obtain it ſhall be my prayers—the Miniſter cannot promiſe—he has done his duty—and it will be my pride at a future day, when its real value ſhall be known, that I bore a leading ſhare in the tranſaction—that I laboured to procure for Ireland ſolid and ſubſtantial benefits, which even two years ago no man had an idea of even looking to.

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